



News Release

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West Nile virus: two human infections reported in Washington

2010 season wraps up with much less activity than last year

OLYMPIA — Two human cases of West Nile virus infection have been reported for the 2010 season. A Grant County resident likely acquired the illness in the state and a Chelan County resident was infected while traveling out of state.

The Grant County resident is a woman in her 70s who experienced several symptoms of West Nile virus and is not currently hospitalized. The Chelan County woman in her 40s traveled to Colorado and was exposed in that state. She has since recovered.

This is a big difference compared to the 2009 season when nearly 40 people were reported as cases and the state's first death from the virus was confirmed in a Yakima County resident.

"We're glad fewer people were infected with the virus so far this season," said Deputy Secretary Gregg Grunenfelder. "West Nile virus is unpredictable and we're not exactly sure why we had a lighter season this year compared to previous years, but it's a relief to see cases drop."

Two dead birds collected in Grant County tested positive for West Nile this year. Nearly 130 mosquito samples collected in Grant, Yakima, and Benton counties tested positive. No horses tested positive for the virus in our state during the 2010 season.

Although West Nile activity was considerably less this year than in recent years, that doesn't mean the risk is over in future seasons. West Nile virus causes illness in birds but can also be spread to people, horses, and other animals by infected mosquitoes. Case counts and the number of positive mosquito samples can be unpredictable from season to season. Infection can be very serious for some people. The best way to reduce the chance of infection is to avoid mosquito bites and reduce mosquito habitat around your home.

Two Washington residents infected with West Nile

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Local and state health agencies, mosquito control districts, and others work to battle West Nile virus in Washington. More information about [West Nile virus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/wnv) (www.doh.wa.gov/wnv) as [a reportable condition](http://www.doh.wa.gov/notify/nc/wnv.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/notify/nc/wnv.htm) is available on the Department of Health website.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for *a healthy dose of information*.